

Health Minister assures action

Orthopaedic Hospital docs defer strike

By Staff Correspondent

The Health Minister assured the Orthopaedic Hospital doctors of punitive measures against the Class Four employees for assaulting doctors and going on a strike since Friday, thereby aggravating miseries of the patients.

According to the Director of the hospital, the Minister assured the doctors of administrative disciplinary actions against the guilty persons during a meeting with the doctors at the hospital lounge yesterday afternoon.

The doctors had threatened to go on a strike from 12 noon yesterday demanding actions against the unruly employees.

The Class Four employees began their strike following the eviction of one of the employees by police from a doctor's room which he had occupied.

During the occupation, the employees beat up a doctor and locked up all the departments of the hospital.

The doctors, against all odds kept the hospital running with assistance from nurses, visitors of patients and the police.

The doctors had filed two cases against the Class Four employees in the Tejgaon thana, one for illegal trespassing and the other for assaulting a doctor.

The doctors decided to go on a strike from noon yesterday as the ministry had not taken any action against the employees, but they withheld their decision as the Minister intervened in the morning.

The Minister, accompanied by the Deputy Minister, however did not mention what measure the ministry might take.

"For such indiscipline," the Director told The Daily Star, "the ministry could at first suspend the employees and then serve show cause notices against them and the ministry holds the power to terminate them ultimately."

The Class Four employees however, did not react to such a development. The Director had urged the employees to join duties last evening.

The Minister urged the doctors to carry out their duties.

Meanwhile, the Director informed that some of the patients have left the hospital in panic.

No operation was carried out in the hospital yesterday.

However, the doctors treated some 60 to 70 patients at the Emergency Ward of the hospital.

[Editorial on page 4]



Women and children in Ward No-38 of the city brought out a procession in truck yesterday protesting acute shortage of water. —Star photo

US envoy on child labour

From Page 1 Col 4

tions, Ambassador Milam reiterated the assertion that Bangladesh labour is cheap saying that it is a "myth".

It is perhaps true for the non-union labour, he said, but the unit cost of industrial labour is "pretty high" because of low productivity and a high degree of labour militancy.

Noting that the government has to set the tone of industrial labour relations, the US envoy strongly suggested continued tripartite dialogue between the industrialists, trade unions and the government to link wages with productivity.

However, referring to the recently concluded 48-hour strike by SKOP, he said, "I must say the government set a much, much better tone" recently relating to labour relations.

On the ongoing economic reform measures, Ambassador Milam said that "Bangladesh should move quickly in structural reforms" or else there is a possibility of falling behind as "extensive" economic reforms have already been initiated in other regional countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Noting that macro-economic reforms are on track, he said that it was time to initiate reforms in the financial, power, trade, export and other sectors.

Expansion must come to export sectors, he said, which involves opening up the economy.

"Bangladesh must transform itself from a traditional trading economy to a manufacturing economy," he added.

Ambassador Milam pointed out that a "working consensus" between the business com-

munity and the government was needed to succeed in the liberalisation, privatisation and industrialisation initiatives.

The key point in liberalisation, he said, was opening up of the economy to imports and to reduce tariff while industrialisation would have to be export-oriented as the internal market was not likely to grow much in the foreseeable future.

The lack of consensus is hampering the privatisation process in the country, he said, adding that a process of rationalisation is needed as the sick industries cannot be privatised unless they are rationalised.

The US envoy observed that investment climate in the country is nowhere near the ideal situation because of a militant industrial labour, problems of law and order and the "overall image" of Bangladesh.

"A climate of hostility towards foreign investment exists in the country which is coming from the levels of the government itself," he added.

He went on to add "the fact that they have to go from pillar to post from ministry to ministry, that puts off foreign investors."

Ambassador Milam noted that a number of gas exploration proposals by US multinationals have been "languishing" with the government for the past three years forcing them to lose interest.

The power sector, he pointed out "is an excellent place for government to rationalise its policy of privatisation."

"Without private investment in the power generating sector," he said, "there would be a problem to set up other indus-

Rohingya situation reviewed

An inter-ministerial meeting here yesterday reviewed the latest situation concerning the Rohingya refugees, particularly their repatriation, reports UNB.

Held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the meeting was attended by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and concerned officials.

MCCI hails

From Page 1 Col 8 more than the loss of production due to non-operation of a few mills and factories on the 15th and 16th March, 1993" the MCCI said yesterday in a statement issued by its president, Latifur Rahman.

"Committments are also due to all those political parties which refused to extend support to the SKOP's strike programme and thereby established an example of keeping national interests above political expediencies," the statement said.

"In our opinion, a new beginning has been made to enable industrial relations play a supportive role for improvement of investment climate in the country," Latifur Rahman said speaking on behalf of the business community.

Rahman said that the Government in line with the suggestions made by the Bangladesh Employers' Association (BEA), "should immediately use the forum of Tripartite Consultative Committee for initiating deliberations as to how wages in different major industrial sectors can be linked to productivity."

"Indeed, if accountability and result-oriented approach are to be enforced at all levels of the country's economy, productivity has to be a fact of life in wages determination," the MCCI chief argued, strongly pleading for BEA's demand to link productivity to wages.

Gausia market

From Page 1 Col 5 A number of shopkeepers and shop owners said that they chased the Customs officials and police when the enforcers tried to take away some locally made sarees.

"We tried to convince the government officials that the sarees which they wanted to seize were locally made, but they did not pay heed to our arguments," said a shop owner.

However, at one stage of altercation between the shop owners and government officials at Smrity Somvar at Gausia Market, a number of employees and owners of the market who gathered immediately forced the officials to leave the market, witnesses said.

The agitated people closed the collapsible gates of the market and hurled bricks at the officials from different floors of the market, said police.

Police brought the situation under control at around 4:30 pm but no arrest was made.

Sugar price

From Page 1 Col 6 crore. The total loss of the sugar industries last year was Taka 60 crore.

The government decision to reduce sugar price came as stockpiles of sugar remained unsold because of availability of cheap smuggled and imported sugar.

However, after reduction in the price, there had been a little improvement in sales, sources said. Till now, 39,000 tons of sugar have been lifted by traders.

Meanwhile, a top-level meeting of the Industry Ministry recently on the effect of price reduction asked the sugar mills to extract more sugar from sugarcane to counter the loss in pricing.

However, the sugar industry sources said the extraction rate, now about eight per cent, could not be increased further due to the quality of the cane.

Sugar mills sources identified the high price of sugarcane as the main factor behind the high production cost.

The price of sugarcane is now Taka 37 per maund which was only Taka 27 five years ago. Sources said that India, the main source of smuggled sugar, could produce sugar cheaply because of the low sugarcane price, Taka 29 per maund when converted into local currency.

Bangabandhu

From Page 1 Col 4 and essay competitions. In the afternoon, a mild mahfil was held at Bangabandhu Bhaban. Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana, members of the Bangabandhu family and Awami League leaders attended it.

At Tungpara, mild mahfil and discussion meeting were held yesterday in observance of the day. Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Obaidul Quader, poet-litterateur Syed Shamsul Haq, Belal Chowdhury and Rabul Hossain took part in the programmes.

Special CPB conference May 14-16

By Staff Correspondent

The delegates of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) have been urged to attend the special National Conference to be held on May 14-16.

A party press release said Wednesday that all the delegates of the last conference would be considered as the delegates of the special conference and were already served notice to attend the conference.

Wednesday's press statement would be considered as notice to them who did not get the mailed notice, it said.

The special National Conference would discuss the transformation proposal including changing of the name of the party passed by the Central Committee this month.

Hasina: Mujib's name

From Page 1 Col 3 tion leader reiterated her party's allegation that there was no economic principle and specific guidelines before the government and that was the reason for, what she termed, economic stagnation.

The government steps only aims at making its foreign masters happy and not at bringing about people's welfare," the AL leader stated.

The minister (meaning the Finance Minister) begging from the donor countries and agencies, she said adding the foreign aid was being reduced as many foreign-aided projects were not implemented due to the government's wrong policies.

Alleging growing acts of corruption and nepotism by the ministers, Hasina called for resiting such practices for the national interests.

No development is visible under Khaleda government, the opposition leader claimed repeating her blame that the government was only develop-

Gas leak in Bombay: 9 die

BOMBAY, Mar 17: Nine people died and at least 33 were rushed to hospital today after an apparent leak of chemical gas from a factory on the outskirts of the Indian city of Bombay, reports Reuters.

Stock Exchange, had suffered sizeable losses in the January riots in that city.

Muslims bore the brunt of the riots blamed on Hindu militants and the sources said the family might have carried out the bombings to wreak revenge.

Samra said the government was making efforts to bring back the family from Dubai. India and the UAE do not have an extradition treaty but the government is doing "whatever possible under the law."

He identified two men arrested Tuesday as Muslims who sold a car that was filled with explosives and used to blast the Atr India headquarters.

He named them as Bashir Ahmed Abdul Karim Mandilekar, 45, and Mohammad Altaf Mohammad Hasen Shibani, 32, adding they had sold the car to an unidentified buyer about 20 days before the explosions.

Meanwhile, visiting Canadian Minister Joe Clark Wednesday offered his country's help to probe bomb blasts in Bombay and Calcutta.

62 killed in Calcutta bomb blast

From Page 1 Col 5 beside me is dead," he said. Three more suspects were arrested in Bombay today, taking the number held to seven. The city police named a Muslim family of alleged smugglers who fled to Dubai as the prime suspects for the "black Friday" bombings.

Detectives said they would try to establish a possible connection between the blasts in India's two largest cities.

Officials said security forces nationwide had been put on alert following the blast here which ripped through the Muslim-dominated commercial and residential district of Bow Bazar. Security was further tightened at airports, railway stations, bus terminals and at government buildings and public places in New Delhi and elsewhere in India under the federal government alert, Home Ministry officials said.

People are being warned not to touch suspicious objects, to be on the lookout for explosives on public transport or abandoned vehicles and to report immediately any suspicious sightings.

Police in New Delhi and Calcutta responded to a flood of bomb hoax calls today following the explosion in the eastern Indian metropolis, evacuating and searching several buildings.

In Bombay, police announced a 'major breakthrough' with the arrest of three more men. Two confirmed to be Muslims, taking

to seven the number held in connection with the bombings blamed on Muslim underworld figures.

Bombay police chief Amarjeet Singh Samra also said six Muslim brothers, two of whom have been named as Yaqub Momen and Ismail 'Uqer' Memon, had emerged as the prime suspects in the bombings.

In New Delhi, Home Minister Shantkarav Chavan told parliament the government would ask the United Arab Emirates to deport two of the brothers.

"Till now all indications involve... only this one family," Samra told a news conference in Bombay, revealing that 200 kilogram (440 pounds) of Semtex explosives not available in India were used in the chain bombings.

He refused comment on the possible motives, saying a possible larger plot had still to be unravelled.

Police sources said the brothers, the last of whose members, left hurriedly hours before the first explosion ripped through the Bombay

The Midnight File

Yeltsin seeks CIS support

MOSCOW, Mar 17 : President Boris Yeltsin sought Wednesday to broaden support in his struggle with the Russian Congress by calling for stronger military and economic ties in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In an appeal to Commonwealth leaders, Yeltsin said he was "convinced that only through joint efforts by the independent states will it be possible to get through this period of difficulties and trials," reports AP.

Bosnian peace mediators press UN Council to enforce 'no-fly zone'

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 17 : As the Bosnian peace talks resumed Wednesday, the mediators pressed the Security Council to enforce the "no-fly zone" following an aerial bombing raid by warplanes presumed to be Serbian, reports AP.

Two crushed under wheels

By DMCH Correspondent A minor girl and a 50-year-old woman were killed in two road accidents at Baridhara and Shamibagh in the capital Wednesday.

Rupa, 8, was crushed under a speeding truck at Natun Bazar, Baridhara, at around 11:30 am yesterday while she was crossing the road.

Gulshan police seized the truck (Dhaka-Da-4244) and arrested the driver Salmullah.

In another accident an unidentified woman died when a mini bus ran over her near the Shamibagh Graveyard yesterday. The mini bus was bound for Adamjee from Dhaka.

Wife of Azad Products' owner commits suicide

By Staff Correspondent Salma Begum, 25, a wife of a well-known businessman allegedly committed suicide by taking poison in the capital Wednesday following a family row.

Salma took poison at her Shahedbagh residence Tuesday night and died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 2:30 pm Wednesday, reports our DMCH Correspondent.

Salma was the second wife of Abul Kalam Azad, 45, owner of Azad Products Limited.

Relatives said that Azad married Salma last year. But their relationship was very turbulent, they added.

Meanwhile, another housewife, Shanjay Begum, 22, reportedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her Shampur, Kadamtoli residence early Wednesday.

Demra police recovered the body of Shahajay Wednesday morning and sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy, said police.

US-DPRK talks

From Page 1 Col 8 Korea will not have to submit its nuclear development facilities to international inspections.

The international community has urged North Korea to reconsider its decision, which takes effect in three months. China, as the North's closest ally, is seen as pivotal in helping to ease the crisis.

A US Embassy official in Beijing, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the two nations met but would provide no details on the talks.

ADB grant

From Page 1 Col 5 level or lower, it said. The project, to be carried out in six months, covers 7.1 million hectares—48 per cent of the country's total area—which is entirely located in flood plains and susceptible to recurrent floods, cyclones and droughts.

A week earlier, the Bank approved a regional technical assistance grant worth half-a-million dollars to fund a study on women's welfare in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Pakistan.

This assistance will also be made available from the Japan Special Fund.

DESA STARTS SPECIAL OPERATION AGAINST THE DEFAULTING AND ILLEGAL CONSUMERS

The valued power consumers are informed that DESA has already started an allout OPERATION against the DEFAULTING CONSUMERS from early March '93.

As part of this Operation, the following Programme will be implemented :

- The lines of the defaulting consumers having more than two months arrear will be disconnected.
- The illegal consumers will be identified by DESA Courts and legal actions will be taken against them including Jail/Fine(s).
- Theft of energy/ unauthorised use by legal consumers will be identified and legal actions will be taken as per rules against these on the spot.

Please pay your bills to-day to avoid disconnection. If you did not get your bills, please collect it from your nearest DESA Office.



Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA)

Editor : S. M. Ali Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Furans Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices : House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A., Dhaka-1205. PABX : 500092-4. Advertisement : 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-863088. GPO Box No. 3287, GRAM : DAILY STAR DHAKA.